

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1515

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJ: GREEK-TURKISH AEGEAN TALKS IN PARIS

REF: A) ATHENS 1420 B) ANKARA 0777

1. COMMENTING ON THE GREEK-TURKISH AEGEAN CONTINENTAL SHELF TALKS WHICH TOOK PLACE LAST WEEK, AN MFA OFFICIAL WHO ACCOMPANIED AMBASSADOR TZOUNIS TO PARIS TOLD US THAT THE GREEK SIDE HAD EXPECTED LITTLE FROM THE MEETING AND THE RESULTS HAD CONFIRMED ITS EXPECTATIONS. HE NOTED THAT THE TWO SIDES WERE STILL TALKING ON DIFFERENT PLANES CONCERNING THE AEGEAN. THE
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GREEKS REMAIN INSISTENT ON FIRST OBTAINING AN AGREEMENT AS TO THE PROCEDURE TO BE USED FOR DELIMITING THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, WHEREAS THE TURKS ARE STILL PURSUING THE IDEA OF JOINT EXPLOITATION, LEAVING THE MODES OF DELIMITATION TO BE WORKED OUT AT A LATER DATE.

2. OUR MFA SOURCE INDICATED THAT IN THE PARIS TALKS THE

GREEK SIDE HAD, ESSENTIALLY, RENEWED ITS EARLIER PROPOSAL ON DELIMITATION, I.E., A PROCEDURE BASED ON THE MEDIAN LINE BETWEEN THE EASTERN GREEK AEGEAN ISLANDS AND THE TURKISH MAINLAND, WITH SOME SPECIAL ALLOWANCE BEING MADE FOR THOSE AREAS IN THE NORTHERN AEGEAN WHERE THE GREEK ISLANDS ARE FURTHER APART (HE MENTIONED THE AREAS OR OPEN SPACES BETWEEN SAMOS - CHIOS - MYTILINI AND THE EXPANSE NORTHWEST OF MYTILINI). THE MFA OFFICIAL SAID THE GREEKS HAD INTRODUCED A NEW ELEMENT BY REFERRING TO A CONCEPT INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CANADA WHEREBY BOTH SIDES WOULD BE ASSURED EQUAL ACCESS TO THE POTENTIAL PETROLEUM RESOURCES ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF WITHOUT REGARD TO THE ACTUAL DELIMITATION OF THE SHELF. HOWEVER, HE MAINTAINED, THE TURKS HAD SHOWN NO INTEREST IN THIS SUGGESTION.

3. ASKED WHETHER THE TURKS HAD PUT FORTH A PLAN OF THEIR OWN ON DELIMITATION OR HAD RESPONDED TO THE GREEK PROPOSALS OF JUNE 1977, OUR SOURCE GAVE A CATEGORIC NEGATIVE. ONE GENUINE PROBLEM, HE CONTINUED, WAS THAT THE TURKS FELT TIME WAS ON THEIR SIDE. AT PARIS, THEY HAD BEEN QUICK TO POINT TO THE RECENT CHANNEL ISLANDS DECISION AS INDICATIVE OF THE TREND IN THEIR FAVOR. THE GREEKS THEN URGED THAT IF THE TURKS FELT CONFIDENT ON THIS ISSUE THEY SHOULD AGREE TO SUBMIT THE DELIMITATION PROBLEM TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE OR TO AN
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ARBITRATION PANEL, AS THE GREEKS WERE PREPARED TO DO. HOWEVER, THE TURKS HAD REBUFFED THIS SUGGESTION AS THEY HAD BEFORE, REITERATING THEIR PREFERENCE FOR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

4. OUR SOURCE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN NO PROGRESS DURING THE PARIS TALKS, THE ATMOSPHERE HAD BEEN GOOD. BOTH THE GREEK AND TURKISH EXPERTS, HE CONTINUED, HAD VERY MUCH IN MIND THE FORTHCOMING CARAMANLIS-ECEVIT SUMMIT. HE ADDED THAT WHILE THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE SUMMIT HAD NOT YET BEEN FIXED, THE OFFER BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TO HOLD THE MEETING AT STRASBOURG HAD BEEN REJECTED. A DECISION WAS EXPECTED SOON, HE CONCLUDED, AND THE MEETING WOULD PROBABLY OCCUR ON "NEUTRAL" GROUND -- POSSIBLY IN A SMALL TOWN IN AUSTRIA OR SWITZERLAND DURING THE WEEK OF MARCH 5.

5. COMMENT: THE GREEKS CONTINUE TO TELL US THAT THE TURKS ARE UNWILLING TO DISCUSS THE DELIMITATION ISSUE IN SPECIFIC TERMS. THIS WOULD SEEM TO DIFFER FROM WHAT MFA OFFICIAL ERGUVEN TOLD EMBASSY ANKARA RECENTLY WHEN HE INDICATED THAT TURKEY HAS PRESENTED ITS OWN VIEWS TO

THE GREEKS (PARA 7 OF REF B). IN ADDITION, IT APPEARS
THAT OFFICIALS AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL ON BOTH SIDES
HAVE BEEN THINKING ALONG SIMILAR LINES AS TO A POSSIBLE
ARRANGEMENT INVOLVING CORRIDORS. THE DIFFERENCE, OF COURSE,
LIES IN WHETHER THE CORRIDORS WILL BE GRANTED BY GREECE
OR BY TURKEY. IN ANY CASE, IT IS CLEAR FROM OUR MFA
CONTACTS THAT THE GREEKS HAVE NOW RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED THE
TURKISH VIEW THAT NO REAL DISCUSSIONS CAN TAKE PLACE ON THIS SUBJECT
UNTIL AFTER THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS HAVE MET. MILLS

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